

James M. McMan

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Oct 30

Peter -

*This a very fine
piece of work. I agree
with you it will prove
to be most helpful
and should be completed
& kept current.
Let's move time permitting
2004 advise HAK*

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

Vietnam - US Policy Statement
11/5

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29 October 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR COL. HAIG

FROM: Peter Rodman

SUBJECT: The White Book

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By: *NSC letter 13/2/92*
IC: *12/20/92*

Last night I spoke with you about HAK's instruction to me to let the White Book drop for the time being.

I am sending you the following:

1. A detailed outline of the project, as I planned it.
2. The text of what I've completed (about half of the whole).

I have in hand all the source materials for the parts remaining to be completed. It would take me about a week to finish it.

I raised this question because:

1. Some things in it might be useful for the Nov. 3 speech.
2. It might be useful to publish a White Book anyway, regardless of what option is chosen in Viet-Nam, in order to present -- for the first time -- a detailed and sophisticated analysis of what we have done and why we believe it is significant.

The publication of the White Book would give people something to chew on for a while. If it's done intelligently, it will make an impression, and certainly a better impression than yet another "I'm-sticking-to-my-present-policy" speech.

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3. If there is a possibility that he may someday decide he wants a White Book -- and on short notice --, perhaps I'd better keep working on it, though not on a high-priority basis.

Attachments: Outline (Tab A)
Introduction (Tab B)
Most of Part I

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WHITE BOOK
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Perhaps defense of quarantine should be separate document, to minimize impression of long advance preparation.

White Book, too, should perhaps have no reference to quarantine or other extraordinary action in its text except for Introduction

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"We were doing this White Book anyway, but now we are rushing it into print to coincide with this sudden crisis."

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WHITE BOOK

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By: *For letter*
LC: Date *10/20/94*

INTRODUCTION: OUR DESIRE FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

In his radio and television address to the Nation on May 14, 1969*, the President of the United States declared:

"In my campaign for the Presidency, I pledged to end this war in a way that would increase our chances to win true and lasting peace in Vietnam, in the Pacific, and in the world. I am determined to keep that pledge. If I fail to do so, I expect the American people to hold me accountable for that failure."

The course chosen and pursued by this Administration has been one of negotiated settlement.

The United States is not participating in the Paris peace talks as a mere face-saving device. The preceding Administration did not enter the talks on that basis, and we have not pursued them on that basis. We take these negotiations seriously.

The United States abandoned its own quest for military victory, and proposed compromise terms. We expected the other side to do the same.

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Americans have always believed in negotiation as a fair and honorable way of settling conflicts among nations. When negotiations bear fruit, the result is an agreed settlement honorable to both sides. This is not a peculiarly Western view of negotiation; Communist governments and Western

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* The text of this address is reprinted in the Appendix.

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governments have joined together in the past in reaching mutually-acceptable solutions to conflicts -- in Korea in 1953, in Geneva in 1954 and 1962, for example. The United States would like to add "Paris in 1969" to this list. The United States is not interested in establishing a precedent in which negotiations are used as a camouflage for the capitulation of one side or the other. Peaceful coexistence and the long-run preservation of peace depend on the integrity and efficacy of the negotiation process.

The fact that the Paris meetings on Vietnam have not produced an agreed settlement in 18 months is a profound tragedy. The fact that the United States Government is now forced, as a last resort, to undertake extraordinary action to promote a willingness to compromise on the other side is also a profound tragedy -- but it is inescapable.

This Government believes it has demonstrated to the world its own good faith and willingness to compromise.

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This Government is also confident that the publication of

a complete and documented record of its specific actions and proposals, and of the other side's intransigence, will prove to the American people and to the world that the

United States committed itself totally and unreservedly to

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the effort to achieve a negotiated settlement, while North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front stubbornly and cynically continued to demand nothing less than American surrender.

This Administration, since coming into office on January 20, 1969, has made a major shift in the objectives, direction, and course of United States policy in Vietnam. We do not say this in a partisan spirit, but, on the contrary, we say it in order to indicate that we have treated the previous Administration's first steps toward peace as a point of departure.

-- Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford, had announced, on April 11, 1968, a ceiling of 549,500 on the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam.

-- President Lyndon Johnson had announced, on October 31, 1968, the total cessation of air, naval, and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam.

-- The Paris meetings, which began on May 13, 1968, had been expanded to include the Government of South Vietnam and the National Liberation Front according

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These were necessary and important measures.

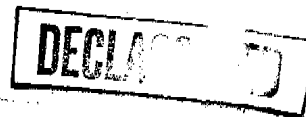
Nevertheless, this Government, since January 20, 1969, has made fundamental changes in the United States' negotiating posture at Paris.

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Before January 20, 1969, the United States insisted that the essential precondition for peace was that North Vietnam halt its military activity unilaterally; only after such a halt by North Vietnam would the United States move to de-escalate in response. The joint communique issued at the Manila Summit Conference of allied heads of government on October 24, 1966, declared:

"Our sole demand on the leaders of North Vietnam is that they abandon their aggression."

President Johnson stated in a letter to President Ho Chi Minh dated February 8, 1967:

"I am prepared to order a cessation of the bombing against your country and the stopping of further augmentation of U. S. forces in South Vietnam as soon as I am assured that infiltration into South Vietnam by land and by sea has stopped." (emphasis added)

On other occasions during the previous Administration, it was stated that the United States would not move to de-escalate the conflict without specific prior assurances

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of State announced, in a statement issued on January 27, 1967:

"We are prepared to order a cessation of all bombing of North Vietnam the moment we are assured -- privately or otherwise -- that this step will be answered promptly by a corresponding and appropriate de-escalation of the other side."
(Dep't of State Bulletin, vol. LVI, No. 1443, Feb. 20, 1967, p. 285. Emphasis added)

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Secretary Rusk stated in an interview on October 6, 1968:

"We are prepared to stop the bombing, but what would happen? No one can tell us. No one can tell us. We think we are entitled to some answer to that question from some source, through some channel, so that we can have some confidence that stopping the bombing would be a step toward peace." (Dep't of State Bulletin, vol. LIX, No 1532, Nov. 4, 1968, p. 472.)

On the specific and all-important question of troop withdrawal from South Vietnam, the policy of the United States Government was the "Manila Formula," as announced on October 24, 1966, which could promise no U. S. withdrawal until at least six months after the cessation of infiltration from the North and the withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces:

"Allied forces... shall be withdrawn... as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled." (Dep't of State Bulletin Vol. No. , Nov. , 1966, p. . Emphasis added)

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make the first move, either to cease its military activity or to make known its willingness to do so.

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The posture of the United States Government since January 20, 1969, has been based, not on a demand that the other side move first, but on proposals for genuine mutuality. On the question of withdrawal of forces from South Vietnam, the President stated on May 14, 1969:

"Our offer provides for a simultaneous start on withdrawal by both sides; agreement on a mutually acceptable timetable; and for the withdrawal to be accomplished quickly." (Emphasis added)

Even more fundamental to the United States posture today is the fact that this Government has gone beyond its own proposals of mutuality and has taken the initiative to begin the process of disengagement, without waiting for any action or assurance from the other side. This was precisely the approach suggested by critics of United States policy at home and abroad. It reflects a belief that a demonstration -- by deeds, not words -- of our good faith and earnest desire to end the war should be the most effective way of encouraging the other side to act similarly; the result, in other words, would be the very mutuality of withdrawal which this Government -- and most of its critics -- recognized as the only fair way to resolve the conflict.

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The United States Government recognized that this approach -- unilateral initiatives for peace -- was consistent with its honor and with its continuing faith in the importance of an agreed-upon negotiated settlement. The United States also understood -- and knew that the American people and the peoples of the world understood -- that this conciliatory posture placed the burden upon North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front to respond with tangible evidence of their willingness to reduce and terminate the armed conflict in accordance with the principle of compromise.

In particular, the United States Government took the following unilateral steps, as explained and documented in the body of this book:

-- As evidence of our expressed renunciation of the objective of military victory, we took unilateral steps to reduce the intensity of fighting on the ground. For example:

Now 20%

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announced an 11 percent reduction in the number of B-52 sorties over South Vietnam.

-- In August, 1969, the President instructed U. S. commanders in South Vietnam to alter the objective and intensity of U. S.-initiated military activity, from

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a program of maximum pressure on the enemy (by means of "search-and-destroy" operations) to one of "protective reaction" (by means of "clear and hold" operations). These new orders had the effect of reducing casualties on both sides.

-- As evidence of our determination to disengage ourselves from this war, we undertook to begin this process unilaterally.

For example:

-- The United States began the process of withdrawal with the announcement on June 8, 1969, of a reduction of 25,000 in the authorized troop ceiling, and with the announcement on September 16, 1969, of a further reduction of 35,000. The total reduction of 60,000 so far represents a 12 percent reduction in the overall troop level, and a 20 percent reduction in the number of U.S. combat troops in Vietnam.

-- The President instructed U.S. commanders in South Vietnam to devote their maximum attention to the task of turning over to the South Vietnamese forces responsibility for all aspects of the war effort -- coping with the regular North Vietnamese forces as well as with Vietcong insurgency.

-- As evidence of our desire to contribute to a political rather than military solution to the conflict, the United

States, for the first time, offered detailed proposals for the substance and procedure of a political settlement. Our

proposals included:

-- free elections, organized by an interim coalition electoral commission.

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-- a willingness to discuss the other side's proposals on their merits, in order to find common ground on the details of organizing these elections, and on the details of all other issues.

-- a willingness to accept any political outcome which is arrived at through free elections, and renunciation of any desire to retain U.S. military bases in South Vietnam.

-- international supervision, to protect the interests of both sides during the carrying out of an agreed ceasefire, mutual withdrawal, and free elections.

The United States Government took these unilateral initiatives, and stands by them. These initiatives have been part of an ongoing process; there is no question but that our troop reductions and our diplomatic flexibility were to continue. All that was needed to continue or accelerate the pace of United States disengagement was concrete evidence that North Vietnam and the N. L. F. were ^{as} ~~are~~ willing as we were to achieve a political settlement. This is why the impasse at Paris has been so profoundly disappointing -- because the United States has been determined, not to prolong the war

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~~was~~ N. L. F. had to do to "get us out" was to be willing to accept the establishment of fair electoral procedures for determining the political future of South Vietnam. In refusing to discuss such procedures, North Vietnam and the N. L. F. have misconceived their own interests -- unless, perhaps,

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they have reason to lack confidence in their ability to compete successfully in a ~~far~~, internationally supervised, election.

For there is an irreducible minimum which the United States is not obliged to concede, under any standard of fairness or any standard of decent relations between states. That irreducible minimum is the principle that the future of South Vietnam must be decided by submission of the conflict between the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front to the unfettered political processes of South Vietnam. Both sides claim to represent the will and the best interests of the people of South Vietnam. Surely, no one knows whose claim is accurate better than the South Vietnamese people do themselves. No outside party knows what a government that truly reflects the political preferences of the people of South Vietnam -- be it a coalition or otherwise -- would look like. The task at Paris is to transform this contest from a military one into a political one, and to let the South Vietnamese people decide the outcome.

This is why the United States cannot be a party to any solution of the war which arbitrarily imposes a government of a particular stripe -- or stripes -- upon the people of South Vietnam from the conference rooms of Paris.

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This is also why the United States cannot accept the demand of the other side that we "overthrow" (as they put it) the Government in Saigon. The National Liberation Front, aided by the armed forces of North Vietnam (who are now doing 70 percent of the fighting), ~~has~~^{has} not been able to overthrow the Government in Saigon after several years of bitter fighting. The United States will never accept the idea that we must do it for them.

Both sides -- and others in the middle -- deserve a change to compete politically.

In short, as the President of the United States expressed it in his address to the 24th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 18, 1969:

"We in the United States want to end this war, and we are ready to take every reasonable step to achieve that goal. But let there be no question on this one fundamental point: in good conscience we cannot, in the long term interest of peace we will not, accept a settlement that would arbitrarily dictate the political future of south Vietnam and deny to the
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their own future free of any outside interference."

These are our terms; they are reasonable compromise terms. We do not retract them.

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October 31, 1968, Even in the Face of Communist
Violations1. The Content of the Understanding of October 31, 1968.a. The President's Announcement

President Lyndon Johnson announced to the Nation on October 31, 1968, that an understanding had been reached with North Viet-Nam which provided for the cessation of all U.S. bombing of North Viet Nam and for the expansion of the Paris talks to include representatives of the Government of South Viet Nam and the National Liberation Front. In addition, it was understood on both sides that "prompt, productive, serious and intensive negotiations" would begin, and that the shelling of cities and violation of the demilitarized zone would cease.

The President stated:

"Last Sunday evening, and throughout Monday, we began to get confirmation of the essential understanding that we had been seeking with the North Vietnamese on the

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"Now, as a result of all these developments I have ordered that all air, naval and artillery bombardment of North Viet Nam cease as of 8 a.m., Washington time, Friday morning [November 1, 1968]. I have reached this decision on the basis of the developments in the Paris talks. And I have reached it in the belief that this action can lead to progress toward a peaceful settlement of the Vietnamese war.

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"What we now expect -- what we have a right to expect -- are prompt, productive, serious and intensive negotiations in an atmosphere that is conducive to progress. We have made clear to the other side that such talks cannot continue if they take advantage of them. We cannot have productive talks in an atmosphere where the cities are being shelled and where the demilitarized zone is being abused.

"... I have finally decided to take this step now and to really determine the good faith of those who have assured us that progress will result when bombing ceases and to try to ascertain if an early peace is possible." *

b. Assurances Given to the United States

"We are acting on more than an assumption," Secretary Rusk indicated at a news conference on November 1, 1968. (Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LIX, No. 1534, November 18, 1968, p. 521) The United States had received, beforehand, assurances from intermediaries and hints from the North Viet Nam that]bombing halt would have the consequences the President anticipated.

It would be instructive, at this point, to describe some of these assurances. Some came from allied governments, some from Communist governments, and some from neutrals. A partial list would include.

*Extracts from this address are reprinted in the Appendix.

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[to be filled in]

The most significant of these assurances came from the Soviet Union. On June 5, 1968, Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin delivered to Secretary Rusk a letter to the President from Alexei Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. This letter, the text of which is reprinted in full in the Appendix, contained the following assurances:

"We have repeatedly stated our view to you personally and to your representatives that complete and unconditional discontinuance by the United States of the bombing and of other acts of war against the DRV [Democratic Republic of Viet Nam] can clear the way to a peaceful settlement in Vietnam. And if the Government of the DRV consented to enter into official talks with representatives of the USA before complete cessation of the bombing of the territory of the DRV, this does not by any means imply that further progress in the negotiations ings and other acts of war by the USA against the DRV are now the principal obstacle to headway at the meetings in Paris.

"My colleagues and I think -- and we have grounds to do so -- that complete cessation by the United States of bombing and other acts of war with respect to the DRV could contribute to a breakthrough in the situation and produce prospects for a peaceful settlement... We should like to hope that the present opportunities will not be missed." (emphasis added)

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Various Soviet officials subsequently told the United States Government that the letter would not have been sent unless Moscow had solid reasons for believing that Hanoi would honor Chairman Kosygin's commitment.

Intensive negotiation took place over the summer of 1968, as the United States sought an acceptable formulation of such an understanding. The Soviet Union even contributed suggestions, informing U.S. officials that the North Vietnamese representatives at Paris would be receptive if the U.S. negotiators raised them in private talks. The United States followed up some of these Soviet suggestions; the responses from the North Vietnamese were often disappointing. But negotiation proceeded. At a ~~Secret~~ meeting on October 11, the United States negotiators made clear the U.S. position on the DMZ and the shelling of cities, stating that respect for the DMZ and an end to the indiscriminate shelling of cities were not "conditions" for stopping the bombing but rather a description of the only kind of situation which would permit serious negotiations, and was the bombing halt, to continue.

On October 12, 1968, a Soviet official in Paris called on U. S. negotiator Cyrus Vance and delivered two messages:

"I have good reason to believe that if the U.S. stops unconditionally and completely the bombardments and other

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acts of war against the DRV, the delegation at the DRV will agree to the participation of the representatives of the GVN [Government of South Viet-Nam] in the talks on the problem of political settlement in Viet Nam. Thus, these talks would be held by representatives of the DRV, the USA, the NLF and the Saigon Government.

"I can tell you also on good authority that if the question of the unconditional and complete cessation of bombardments and all other acts of war against North Viet Nam is resolved positively and promptly, ~~the delegation at the DRV is ready to discuss seriously and in good faith other questions relating to the political settlement in Viet-Nam, provided of course that the other side would also act seriously and in good faith.~~"
(emphasis added)

This communication signified to the United States that the two sides were close to an agreement on the content of the understanding.

Finally, on October 28, Ambassador Dobrynin delivered another message from Chairman Kosygin, which assured the President that Hanoi intended to honor the understanding:

"The[North] Vietnamese leaders have repeatedly told ~~us~~ us... about the seriousness of their intentions. The most recent facts, in our view, convincingly prove that the Vietnamese side is doing everything possible to put an end to the war in Vietnam and reach a peaceful settlement on the basis of respect for the legitimate rights of the Vietnamese people. In this connection,

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Vietnamese side are without foundation.

These were the developments referred to by President Johnson when he announced the cessation of U.S. bombing on the evening of October 31, 1968.

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Acknowledgement by North Viet-Nam

On November 16, 1968, a North Vietnamese official in Paris gave further confirmation that an understanding existed, and that it included the specific acts of de-escalation to which the United States had referred. A press report the next day gave the following account of a "background briefing" given by the Communist representative:

"PARIS, Nov. 16 -- A qualified North Vietnamese official said today that Hanoi would respect the buffer status of the demilitarized zone if allied forces would do the same and if the United States did not resume the bombing of North Vietnam.

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"The North Vietnamese official also charged that continuing United States reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam violated the secret understanding between Washington and Hanoi that ended the bombing of the North on November 1.

"United States officials have asserted that continuing air reconnaissance was permitted under terms of the understanding and that Hanoi had tacitly accepted the flights.

"The North Vietnamese official, who asked not to be identified or quoted directly, disagreed. However, he said that the reconnaissance flights did not invalidate the agreement to halt the bombing.

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" . . . The North Vietnamese official said simply that if the bombings were kept in suspension and if the allies ceased violating the zone, the Statute of the 1954 Geneva accords on Vietnam barring military activities in the zone would be respected.

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"Under questioning, he said this did not involve new pledges or new commitments from Hanoi because it has always respected the buffer zone, United States assertions to the contrary.

"Allied diplomats regarded these remarks as a departure. They noted that Hanoi had frequently accused the allies of violating the demilitarized zone without having said before that it would respect the zone if the allies stopped their intrusions."

[New York Times, Nov. 17, 1968, p. 1, col. 3 & p.20, col. 4]

2. Communist Violations of the Understanding

a. November 1968 to January 1969

The Communists began violating this understanding within days of President Johnson's announcement of the bombing halt.

Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford, at a news conference on November 12, 1968, stated that there had been violations of the demilitarized zone and repeated attacks on smaller South Vietnamese cities.

[Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol. UX, No. 1536, Dece. 2, 1968, pp. 568, 570]

A Department of State announcement on November 13 "emphasized[d] the serious view we take of the verified instances since Nov. 9 in which North Vietnamese forces fired on Allied forces south of the DMZ from positions within the DMZ. Our representatives in Paris have brought this situation forcefully to the attention of the North Vietnamese."

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Ambassador Averell Harriman stated at a press briefing on December 4 that "they have reduced the military action in and around the DMZ, but they are not entirely out of the DMZ, which is a most annoying position ..." [Dept. of State Bulletin, vd. LIX, No. 1539, Dec. 23, 1968, p. 651]

U. S. spokesmen in South Vietnam reported nearly 500 instances of enemy activity in the DMZ between November 1 and December 3, and 125 instances of enemy bombardment of South Vietnamese cities in the same period. [See New York Times, Dec. 4, 1968, p. 14, col. 1; New York Times, Dec. 3, 1968, p. 8, col. 1]

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On January 7, 1969, the South Vietnamese Government announced that it had complained to the International Control Commission about 840 instances in which enemy soldiers, weapons, or fresh fortifications had been spotted in the DMZ in the nine weeks following the cessation of bombing of the North. "[See New York Times, Jan. 8, 1969, p. 8, col. 1.]

b. The Communist Spring Offensive

The flurry of Communist violations of the understanding between November 1968 and January 1969 were only a prelude to a full-scale offensive launched in February, which included unprovoked attacks on major South Vietnamese cities.

The high command of the People's Liberation Armed Forces (the military arm of the National Liberation Front) exhorted its forces in an order of February 14, 1969, to "launch new simultaneous attacks" all over South Viet Nam and to "increase military pressure on all fronts" during the new year. On February 23 and 24, 1969, Communist forces launched a series of mortar and rocket attacks on 115 targets on South Vietnamese

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/04/28 : LOC-HAK-242-4-19-8, and Hue, as well as on the U.S. ~~base~~ base at Bien Hoa. The North Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs trumpeted on February 25, 1969, that "the South Vietnamese people have the right to fight against the United States aggressors at any place on Vietnam territory."

At the sixth plenary session of the Paris meetings on February 27, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge warned the Communists that:

"The consequences of these attacks remain your responsibility. They clearly raise a question as to your side's true desire to work toward a peaceful settlement of this conflict." [Department of State Bulletin, Vol. _____ No. _____, February _____]

On March 2, Communist forces again shelled Saigon. These unprovoked attacks, in clear defiance of the understanding of October 31, 1968, were cynically justified in the North Vietnamese press as a contribution to peace! Toward the end of March, the North Vietnamese French-language weekly newspaper Courrier du Vietnam declared:

"We are convinced that there could be no better stimulant to promote the Paris talks than repeated blows against the United States expeditionary corps, and we are acting accordingly. That is the way to bring back peace."

[See New York Times, March 23, 1969, p. 2, col. 6.]

The Communist idea of peace, apparently, is "final victory." North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap later described these spring attacks as "timely" and "wonderful." In an address on June 22, 1969, to the Second "Determination-to-Win" Emulation Congress of the North Vietnamese Antiaircraft and Air

Forces, Giap boasted:

"Early this spring, when the Nixon Administration, which had just assumed power, was at a loss to settle the Viet-Nam problem, the southern troops and people launched new, strong, and timely attacks. Their very wonderful, high-efficiency battles bewildered the U.S. aggressors. These relentless offensives have proved that the southern troops have become increasingly strong in fighting the enemy and that South Vietnam, the fatherland's brass bastion, has great capabilities of fighting strongly, relentlessly, and resolutely until final victory."

The United States Government chose on that occasion not to repudiate its own obligations under the October 31 understanding, nor even to accuse the Communist side of a material breach of the understanding, though a material breach it clearly was. The New York Times reported that its "investigations in the field have indicated in case after case that the intensity and results of the current enemy offensive were underplayed in communiques and by official allied spokesmen." [New York Times, March 13, 1969, p. 1, col. 7.]

The President had resolved not to act precipitately, and to show restraint as proof of our good-faith

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desire to preserve the prospects for mutual de-escalation in the future. At the same time, the President issued a warning that further abuse of the understanding would be met by an appropriate U.S. response. At his news conference on March 4, 1969, he stated:

"Technically, it could be said that it is a violation. Whether we reach the conclusion that the violation is so significant that it requires action on our part is a decision we will be reaching very soon if those attacks continue at their present magnitude.

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"We have not moved in a precipitate fashion, but the fact that we have shown patience and forbearance should not be considered a sign of weakness. We will not tolerate a continuation of a violation of an understanding. But more than that, we will not tolerate attacks which result in heavy casualties to our men at a time that we are honestly

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trying to seek peace at the conference table in Paris. An appropriate response to those attacks will be made if they continue." [Department of State Bulletin, Vol. _____ No. _____ March 1969, p. _____]

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The President added at his news conference of March 14, 1969:

"We have issued a warning. I will not warn again. If we conclude that the level of casualties is higher than we should tolerate, action will take place." [Department of State Bulletin, Vol. ____, No. ____, March ____ 1969, p. ____]

In sum, the response of this Administration to its first provocation from the enemy was to "turn the other cheek." The reaction of the other side was initially encouraging, as the number of attacks by North Vietnamese forces tapered off. Enemy action was to step up again in August, however, and September and October 1969 saw incessant and mounting calls for autumn and winter offensives. (These will be discussed below.)

In retrospect, it is apparent that the President's forbearance encouraged the other side not to recognize and reciprocate his good faith but to persist in its quest for military victory. North Viet-Nam and the National Liberation Front not only showed contempt for his conciliatory posture but openly

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~~denied his warnings.~~

3. The Agreement to Negotiate Seriously

a. The Communist Refusal to Negotiate Privately
with the South Vietnamese Government.

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According to the Soviet assurances communicated to the United States Government on October 12, 1968, the understanding which led to the cessation of all bombing of the North included an "agree[ment] to ~~take on the part~~ the participation of the representatives of the GVN in the talks on the problem of political settlement in Viet-Nam." On March 25, 1969, President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Viet-Nam declared at a news conference that his Government was ready to begin private talks in Paris with North Viet-Nam and the National Liberation Front, either separately or together, without prior conditions. President Thieu has reaffirmed this offer on several occasions since then.

Although all parties have been represented at the public sessions at Paris since January 1969, it is reasonable to assume that the most significant communications and bargaining are the kind that take place at ~~secret~~ private sessions. The United States and North Viet-Nam, it should be noted, have communicated

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with the North Vietnamese since the time the Paris talks began in 1968. While the Communist negotiators have repeated time and time again that the political future of South Viet-Nam should be settled by the South Vietnamese people themselves, neither the North Vietnamese nor N. L. F. negotiators have yet agreed to talk privately with representatives ~~xxx~~ of the Government of South Viet-Nam.

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This, too, is a breach of the understanding of October 31, 1968 -- and a continuing one. It is, for obvious reasons, one of the most significant obstacles to progress at Paris. The United States and South Viet-Nam have waited for one year.

b. The Absence of "Prompt, Productive, Serious and Intensive Negotiations"

The Communist refusal to negotiate with the South Vietnamese Government is but one aspect of a more fundamental Communist breach of faith. The crucial importance of the understanding of October 31, 1968, from the United States point of view, lay in the expectation that, in President Johnson's words, "prompt, productive, serious and intensive negotiations" would begin once the United States halted all bombing of North Viet-Nam. The Soviet Union had assured the U.S. Government on October 12, 1968, that North Viet-Nam "is ready to discuss seriously and in good faith other questions relating to the political settlement in Viet-Nam."

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The United States and the Government of South Viet-Nam have lived up to their part of the bargain. For one year, we have condoned the Communist breach of faith in the hope that

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"prompt, productive, serious and intensive negotiations" were about to begin.

The remainder of Part I of this White Book recounts in detail the supreme effort made by this Administration, at the conference table and on the battlefield, to turn the promise of "prompt, productive, serious and intensive negotiations" into a reality.

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B. Renunciation of Military Victory

On February 8, 1966, the United States Government and the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam joined together in the Declaration of Honolulu. The South Vietnamese Government declared, in Part II of the document:

"We must defeat the Vietcong and those illegally fighting with them on our soil. -- We are the victims of an aggression directed and supported from Hanoi. ... The defeat of that aggression is vital for the future of our people of South Vietnam."
(Emphasis in original)

The United States associated itself with this objective by declaring, in Part III of the same document:

"The United States of America is joined with the people and Government of Vietnam to prevent aggression. This is the purpose of the determined effort of the American Armed Forces now engaged in Vietnam. The United States seeks...only to prevent aggression, and its pledge to that purpose is firm. It aims simply to help a people and government who are determined to help themselves."

The joint communique issued at the Manila Summit Conference

of allied heads of government on October 24, 1966, declared:
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"We shall continue our military and all other efforts, as firmly and as long as may be necessary, in close consultation among ourselves until the aggression is ended."

When this Administration took office on January 20, 1969, the level of U.S. forces in South Vietnam was still increasing.

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Although a ceiling had been imposed on the over-all troop level in April 1968, the actual troop level was still gradually increasing toward that ceiling. The troops in transit on January 20, 1969, raised the over-all total to an all-time high when they arrived in South Viet-Nam in February. The United States had not yet demonstrated that it was not seeking a military solution.

The new Administration changed the objective of U.S. policy in Viet-Nam in a manner consistent with its desire to reach a negotiated compromise settlement. Ambassador Lodge affirmed at the 16th plenary session at Paris on May 8, 1969:

"The first objective of the U.S. Government with respect to the Viet-Nam conflict is a negotiated settlement in Paris. The aim of our policy is peace. It is the simple truth that we are not seeking a military victory in Viet-Nam."

Not only are we not seeking military victory ; we have also rejected the idea that the political solution -- whatever it is -- should be determined by military means. As the President stated in his address on May 14:

"We have ruled out attempting to impose a purely military solution on the battlefield."

The explicit renunciation of military victory in the midst of a war is an extraordinary action for a government to take. Perhaps it would have been more useful, from the point of view of strengthening
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tary victory, even while being willing in fact to settle for a compromise. But the United States was determined to show its good faith, and to refute ^{in advance} /
any charges that it was seeking to determine the future of South Viet-Nam by military means or to bargain from "positions of military strength."
We have declared that we do not wish to remain in South Viet-Nam, and that we will accept any political outcome freely chosen by the South Vietnamese people -- and we mean it.

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C. Unilateral Military De-escalation

As earnest of our declared desire for a political rather than military solution of the war, the United States Government began the process of de-escalation on the ground in South Vietnam even while the war was still continuing. While the understanding of October 31, 1968, provided for cessation of U.S. attacks against North Vietnam, and only in response to prior assurances that the enemy would de-escalate in certain respects in return, this Administration has acted to lower the intensity of the fighting in the South, and without prior assurances that the other side would reciprocate.

1. Cutback of B-52 Sorties

On April 1, 1969, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announced that the rate of U.S. B-52 sorties over South Vietnam would be reduced from a level 1800 per _____ to a level of 1600 per _____. ~~This amounted to a reduction of 11 percent.~~

~~Although this was partly for budgetary reasons, this reduction~~

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U.S. military effort which the enemy has long regarded as especially significant. At almost every session of the Paris peace talks, Communist negotiators have referred to B-52 strikes. We have responded.

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A further reduction is a level of 1440, was made in September. This amounts to an over-all reduction of 20%, which has the

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2. Cutback of Tactical Air Sorties

Since _____, 1969, United States forces in South Vietnam have flown tactical air missions at a rate of ____ percent lower than before.

3. Modification of Ground Strategy and Tactics

Since August 1969, United States ground forces in South Vietnam have fought under new orders which significantly altered the emphasis in U.S. strategy and tactics. This is apparent to the enemy on the battlefield, and it is also evident in published reports.

These new orders have the effect of reducing the pressure brought by U.S. forces on the enemy. As Secretary of State William Rogers stated in a televised interview on October 12, 1969:

"We have changed the orders from 'maximum pressure' to 'protective reaction,' which means that we are not maintaining the same maximum pressure on the enemy.

"The rate of combat activity is less than it has been for a great number of months -- our casualties

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As Secretary Rogers had stated in August, this reduction of combat activity was the result of the new U.S. strategy, while all increases in activity -- such as the burst of Communist attacks in early August -- were enemy-initiated. The Secretary revealed in his news conference of August 20:

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"[T]he United States did something to lower the level of activity.

"... The fact is that the lull was partly because of the reaction of the United States, and the reason that the activity increased was because of the enemy's action."

The Secretary mentioned in the same news conference that one guideline of the new tactics was "to take into consideration the activity of the enemy."

The new strategy of "protective reaction" has as its principal task the reduction of casualties among U. S. combat and support personnel as well as among civilians. As the White House stated in its "Fact Sheet" of October 21, 1969:

"We have emphasized to our military commanders the requirement that losses be held to an absolute minimum, consistent with their mission to protect allied forces and the civilian population."

As Secretary of Defense Laird had stated in his news conference on August 21, 1969, large sweep operations would be limited to instances in which firm intelligence reports indicate significant enemy forces or logistical supply bases directly threatening concentrations of American service personnel and population centers.

Another aspect of the new strategy is related to the high priority assigned by the Administration to the program of "Vietnamization" of the war. U. S. commanders have now been instructed that their most important task is to help train and support South Vietnamese forces. This task is now given

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priority over the intensive pursuit and destruction of enemy forces. For the sooner South Vietnamese forces are capable of carrying the burden of coping with both North Vietnamese regular forces and Vietcong guerrillas, the sooner American forces will leave South Vietnam.

In all its aspects, the new battlefield strategy represents United States determination:

---to de-escalate the fighting, and thereby hasten its end.

---to make clear that the continuation of the killing is the responsibility of the enemy.

---until the war can be brought to an end, to reduce as much as possible the war's terrible toll on the South Vietnamese civilian population.

---until the war can be brought to an end, to reorient the activity of U.S. forces to the bare minimum needed to protect themselves as well as the populated areas.

---to promote the self-reliance of the armed forces of

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when United States forces can leave, even if the war continues.

D. Proposal of Mutual Withdrawal

The former position of the United States Government on the question of troop withdrawal from South Vietnam was the "Manila Formula," as announced in the joint communique issued at the Manila Summit Conference on October 24, 1966:

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"Allied forces are in the Republic of Vietnam because that country is the object of aggression and its government requested support in the resistance of its people to aggression. They shall be withdrawn after close consultation, as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled." (Dep't of State Bulletin, Vol. No. , Nov. , 1966, p.)

This remained the official United States position through January 20, 1969. A statement issued on November 26, 1968, for example, affirmed that:

"The substantive position of the U. S. Government [at the forthcoming expanded Paris talks] will be based on respect for the sovereignty of the Republic of Vietnam, and on the joint communiques of Manila and Honolulu." (Dep't of State Bulletin, vol. No. Dec. 1968, P.)

The United States position today is that announced by President Nixon in his address to the Nation on May 14, 1969.

The keynote of this position is mutuality. The President declared:

"I reaffirm now our willingness to withdraw our forces on a specified timetable. We ask only that North Vietnam withdraw its forces from Vietnam, also in accordance with a timetable.

"We include Cambodia and Laos to ensure that these countries would not be used as bases for a renewed war. The Cambodian border is only 35 miles from Saigon; the Laotian border is only 25 miles from Hue.

"Our offer provides for a simultaneous start on withdrawal by both sides; agreement on a mutually acceptable timetable; and for the withdrawal to be accomplished quickly.

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The President suggested one possible timetable in the same address:

"As soon as agreement could be reached, all non-South Vietnamese forces would begin withdrawals from South Vietnam.

"Over a period of 12 months, by agreed-upon stages, the major portions of all U.S., Allied, and other non-South Vietnamese forces would be withdrawn. At the end of this 12-month period, the remaining U.S., Allied, and other non-South Vietnamese forces would move into designated base areas and would not engage in combat operations.

"The remaining U.S. and Allied forces would move to complete their withdrawals as the remaining North Vietnamese forces are withdrawn and returned to North Vietnam.

"An international supervisory body, acceptable to both sides, would be created for the purpose of verifying withdrawals and for any other purposes agreed upon between the two sides."

This proposal offered the prospect of a guaranteed withdrawal of outside forces and an end to the war within 12 months, and of the completed withdrawal of outside forces as fast as agreed upon. The specific timetable was, as the President pointed out in his May 14 address, "not offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. We are quite willing to consider other approaches consistent with our principles." The essential principle here was genuine mutuality. Ambassador

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Henry Cabot Lodge told the Communist negotiators in Paris

at the 32d plenary session on August 28, 1969:

"We have offered to consider alternative timetables and procedures which you might wish to put forward. This is a flexible and reasonable position." (Dep't of State Bulletin, Vol. , No. , Sept 15, 1969, p. 244)

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On Nov. 3 the President announced that "we have offered the complete withdrawal of all outside forces within one year" (emphasis added).

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One problem, of course, has been that North Vietnam has never admitted that its armed forces are even present in South Vietnam. In fact, there are more than 130 battalions of regular North Vietnamese armed forces actively engaged in South Vietnam (in addition to 50 North Vietnamese battalions in Laos and Cambodia). But the President stated in his May 14 address:

"If North Vietnam wants to insist that it has no forces in South Vietnam, we will no longer debate the point -- provided that its forces cease to be there and that we have reliable assurances that they will not return."

Ambassador Lodge stated in Paris at the 20th plenary session on June 5, 1969:

"We have no rigid formula for the withdrawal of non-South Vietnamese forces. We are interested in results. And the results must be that North Vietnamese, as well as U.S. and Allied, forces withdraw from South Vietnam." (Dep't of State Bulletin, vol. No. , June 23, 1969, p. 536)

The advantage of an agreement on mutual withdrawal is that it would set the stage for further essential steps, including an end to the killing, all on an agreed and secure basis. As Secretary Rogers declared on April 21, 1969:

"A mutual withdrawal of external forces from Vietnam by reasonable stages would bring about de-escalation of fighting. It could then lead to next steps: a total elimination of outside combat forces, cessation of hostilities, and a return to peace. We see no good reason why that process should not begin soon." (Dep't of State Bulletin, Vol. , No, May 12, 1969 p.)

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E. Initiation of U. S. Withdrawal

1. Reduction of the Troop Ceiling

Where the previous four years had seen only the continued buildup of American forces in South Vietnam, until reaching a ceiling of 549,500, the year 1969 has seen the turning point and the beginning of United States disengagement. The troop reductions announced by the President this year are significant for their total number and even more for the fact that they represented the beginning of a process.

On June 8, 1969, the President announced that the troop ceiling was being lowered to 524,500, and that the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam would be down to this level by the end of August 1969.

On September 16, 1969, the President announced a further reduction in the troop ceiling to 484,000, and that the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam would be down to this level by December 15, 1969.

The total reduction of the troop ceiling amounted to 65,500. Since the number of troops in Vietnam at the time of the President's first announcement was slightly below the

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then-authorized ceiling, the number of U.S. troops actually withdrawn under the President's announcements amounts to 60,000.*

As Ambassador Lodge stated at the 35th plenary session of the Paris meetings on September 25, 1969:

"Under the reduction accomplished by the end of August, the following units have now left South Vietnam:

- Nine U.S. infantry battalions
- Four U.S. artillery battalions
- Three U.S. aviation squadrons
- One U.S. engineer battalion
- Three U.S. regimental or brigade headquarters
- One U.S. division headquarters

"Under the program announced by President Nixon on September 16, U.S. forces will be further reduced. By December 15, as compared with the end of August, the following will have left Vietnam:

- Nine U.S. infantry battalions
- Six U.S. artillery battalions
- One U.S. tank battalion
- Ten U.S. aviation squadrons
- Eight U.S. engineer construction battalions

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One U.S. division headquarters
One reconnaissance battalion

*The Government's public statements have emphasized the actual-withdrawal figure of 60,000, in preference to the ceiling-reduction figure of 65,500. The relationship between these two figures was made quite clear in the President's announcement of September 16. (See the text of the announcement in the New York Times, Sept. 17, 1969) The lower figure was used in order to avoid even the appearance of "inflating" the numbers. It is ironic that, in the (unwarranted) confusion that resulted in some quarters, the Administration was taken to task for "juggling" the figures in order to mislead!

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"The replacement of U.S. forces by South Vietnamese constitutes a significant step. It is proof that the United States and the Republic of Vietnam do not wish to keep U.S. forces in Vietnam any longer than they are needed..." (Dept. of State Bulletin, vol. No. , Oct. 13, 1969. P. 316.)

The U.S. forces withdrawn by December 15, 1969, represent 12 percent of the entire U.S. force in South Vietnam and 20 percent of U.S. combat forces there. It is safe to say, without meaning to flatter the prowess of American fighting men, that 60,000 U.S. troops are a formidable military force. When U.S. troops entering South Vietnam first reached the total of 60,000 in the summer of 1965, no one doubted that 60,000 was a significant amount.

Even while North Vietnamese negotiators at Paris continue to disparage the over-all amount of U.S. troop reduction so far, North Vietnamese military planners on the battlefield have paid tribute to the significance of the U.S. withdrawal by their deeds: The bulk of the U.S. forces removed from South Vietnam before the end of August were removed from the Mekong Delta area; in September, North Vietnamese Regular Army battalions appeared in the delta for the first time.

2. Vietnamization

Secretary of Defense Laird stated the purpose of the Administration's new Vietnamization program at an address he gave in Atlantic City, N.J., on October 7, 1969:

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... from to influence the course of events should the continuing efforts at Paris fail. Today, there is an alternative course of action that at the same time complements our efforts at Paris. That program is Vietnamization.

"Vietnamization is something new. Those who view it as a mere continuation of the program for modernizing South Vietnam's armed forces are quite mistaken. It is much more than that. The Vietnamization program represents a major change not only in emphasis but also in objectives. Troop modernization until early this year had the negative goal of partially de-Americanizing the war. Vietnamization has the positive goal of "Vietnamizing" the war, of increasing Vietnamese responsibility for all aspects of the war and handling of their own affairs. There is an enormous difference between these two policies.

"The previous modernization program was designed to prepare the South Vietnamese to handle only the threat of Viet Cong insurgency that would remain after all North Vietnamese regular forces had returned home. It made sense, therefore, only in the context of success at Paris. It was a companion piece to the Paris talks, not a complement and alternative. Vietnamization, on the other hand, is directed toward preparing the South Vietnamese to handle both Viet Cong insurgency and regular North Vietnamese armed forces regardless of the outcome in Paris.

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...abling the South Vietnamese armed forces to assume greater military responsibility. It means, in South Vietnam, building a stronger economy, stronger internal security forces, a stronger government, and stronger military forces.

"The American public must understand and support this if it is to be made to work in Vietnam. By making Vietnamization work, we create a powerful incentive for the enemy to negotiate meaningfully in Paris.

"The enemy needs to know that time is not on his side, that the passage of time is leading to a stronger, not a weaker South Vietnam."

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The Communists object to this U.S. program of Vietnamization. Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, the N.L.F. representative in Paris, charged at the 38th plenary session on October 16, 1969: that:

"[T]he Nixon Administration frantically speeds up the programme of 'Vietnamization of the war'... It pretends that this is a 'de-escalatory' measure. But the 'Vietnamization of the war' is in fact the prolongation of the U.S. colonialist war of aggression in another form."

In fact, the U.S. program of Vietnamization in no way prevents the Communists from joining in an immediate negotiated settlement in Paris. The Communists have often stated that the political future of South Vietnam must be decided among the South Vietnamese themselves. We agree. But we take this to mean all the South Vietnamese people, not just the Communists and those sympathizing with them, and we also take it to exclude the North Vietnamese Army. But the N.L.F. has refused to negotiate with the South Vietnamese Government in Paris, and North Vietnam

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What the Communists really object to is the prospect that the non-Communist South Vietnamese will be able to hold their own after the withdrawal of U.S. forces, even against the combined forces of the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese Army.

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The U.S. program of Vietnamization is simply a way of assisting the Republic of Vietnam to take on the full responsibility of defending the interests of the many millions of non-Communist South Vietnamese (the majority of the population), on the battlefield if the war continues, and in the political arena afterward.

This objective is complementary to the United States proposal for the withdrawal of all external forces from South Vietnam. One hopes that the North Vietnamese Army will withdraw from the South as the United States forces withdraw, to allow the Government and the N. L. F. to compete on a fair basis. The fact that Vietnamization offers the prospect of completing United States military disengagement even before the war can be brought to an end and even before all North Vietnamese forces are withdrawn, while enabling the non-Communist South Vietnamese to defend themselves, is an argument for it, not against it.

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3. Other U. S. Military Cutbacks

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The United States troop reduction in Vietnam is but a part of an over-all reduction of the U. S. military establishment that has begun in advance of a settlement in Vietnam. Nothing could be more indicative of the United States' desire

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not to be a world policeman, and of the United States' good-faith intention to disengage from South Vietnam. If it were our intention to prolong the war, or to retain bases in South Vietnam, or to "hover in the background" with overwhelming force, the United States would not be reducing its defense budget and reviewing its overseas commitments.

--President Nixon and the Premier of Thailand, Thanom Kittikachorn, announced on September 30, 1969, that the United States would withdraw 6,000 of its 48,000 troops in Thailand by July 1, 1970, and 2,200 of these by December 31, 1969.

--Secretary of Defense Laird told a subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations in June 1969 that the United States was reviewing the level of U. S. troops in the Republic of Korea (currently 55,000), and was contemplating a program of "Koreanization" of the joint defense effort there.

--The Administration has announced plans so far to
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reduce defense spending in Fiscal Year 1970 by \$4-6 billion below the level projected in the previous Administration's budget, and to reduce the military authorization request for the same year by \$6.5 billion.

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--The Administration has announced plans so far to reduce the over-all manpower level of the U.S. armed forces by 220,000 by June 30, 1970 -- from 3,455,100 in January 1969 to a level of 3,235,100.

--The projected reduction of U.S. military forces has already enabled the President to announce the cancellation of Selective Service inductions for November and December 1969.

F. Proposal of a Guaranteed Cease-Fire

As long ago as May 1969, the United States Government proposed^a a cease-fire in South Vietnam.

The "Fourteen Points" announced by the United States Government on January 7, 1966, included the following:

"A cessation of hostilities could be the first order of business at a conference or could be the subject of preliminary discussions." (Point 5)

This Administration has followed through on that suggestion. ④

In the President's first detailed proposal for the substantive

discussions at Paris, in his address to the Nation on

May 14, 1969, he proposed a mechanism for agreed cease-fires under international supervision:

"An international supervisory body, acceptable to both sides, would be created for the purpose of verifying withdrawals and for any other purposes agreed upon between the two sides.

"This international body would begin operating in accordance with an agreed timetable and would participate in arranging supervised cease-fires."

Ambassador Lodge told the 16th plenary session of the Paris meetings, on May 8, 1969:

"We envisage the cessation of hostilities as an essential element in an ultimate settlement."

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This proposal has been repeated several times since then. The President stated in his news conference on June 19, 1969: "We want cease-fires, but we want them supervised."

The President's statement of September 16, 1969, reiterated:

"We have offered to negotiate supervised cease-fires under international supervision to facilitate the process of mutual withdrawal."

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The cessation of hostilities is obviously the essential step in the termination of a war. The United States therefore, believes that the terms of a cease-fire should be the subject of discussion at Paris.

It makes a difference what these terms are. In a conventional war, a cease-fire is simply a way of leaving the balance of forces in its already-determined stable configuration. In an unconventional war -- with its rapidly shifting fronts and scattered areas of contested territory -- the timing of an over-all cease-fire will determine the balance of forces in many areas, or will set off desperate last-minute jockeying for position. A cease-fire arrangement which leaves one or both sides insecure will be a source of instability, and not an encouragement to a laying down of arms. If the purpose of a cease-fire is to be achieved -- to end the killing quickly while leaving room for negotiation -- the cease-fire must be recognized as a complex matter (requiring in fact a number of local cease-fires), and arrangements must be made to

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protect the safety and interests of those on both sides who rely on the agreement.

International supervision is therefore essential.* Mutual troop withdrawal according to an agreed timetable will enhance the reliability of the cease-fires; therefore, the international supervisory body proposed by the President on May 14 would verify compliance with both the mutual withdrawal and the cease-fires.

The United States remains flexible on the issue of ceasefire. We are willing to discuss either a general ceasefire or a series of local ceasefires.

Regrettably, neither North Viet-Nam nor the N.L.F. has shown the slightest sign of interest in the idea of a ceasefire. In fact, the Communist attitude on the issue seems to be decidedly negative: Xuan Thuy, chief North Vietnamese negotiator at Paris, on Sept. 2, 1969, dismissed a suggestion that the present territorial status quo in Viet-Nam could be frozen (a standstill ceasefire) as "unrealistic."

*International supervision is a central element of the standstill cease-fire proposals offered by many distinguished
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Committee for a National Political Settlement in Vietnam, and the proposal by Cyrus R. Vance (in the New York Times Magazine, September 21, 1969).

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G. Proposals for Humane Treatment and Release of Prisoners of War

The release of prisoners of war was one of the first

proposals made by this Government upon coming into office.

Ambassador Lodge stated at the very first plenary session of the Paris meetings, on January 25, 1969:

"We seek the early release of prisoners of war on both sides so they can return to their homes and rejoin their families." (Dept of State Bulletin, Vol LX, No. 1546, Feb. 10, 1969, p. 125)

The President repeated this proposal for an "exchange of prisoners" at his very first new conference, on January 27, 1969 (See Dept of State Bulletin, Vol. LX, No. 1547, Feb. 17, 1969, P. 141).

The United States proposed this simple humanitarian act, recalling that in 1953 an agreement reached by North Korea and the United Nations on the exchange of prisoners was soon followed by an agreement on an end to the Korean War. An exchange of prisoners would be a simple first step toward mutual confidence, and would be useful practice in working together toward detailed agreements.

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/04/28 : LOC-HAK-242-4-19-8 allously ignored this proposal.

The United States therefore raised, in the summer of 1969, the question of North Vietnam's continued disregard of the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of

(to which North Viet-Nam claims to adhere).

Prisoners of War^A Ambassador Lodge told the Communist negotiators at the 32nd plenary session of the Paris meetings on August 28, 1969, that:

"On the question of American prisoners of war detained in North Vietnam, international custom, the Geneva convention, and past practice, as well as simple humanitarian considerations, require that the names of the prisoners whom you hold should be made available and that there be impartial inspection of the POW camps, a guarantee of a regular flow of mail to and from the prisoners, and a release of the sick and wounded prisoners on both sides."
(Dept of State Bulletin, Vol. No. , Sept 15, 1969 P. 245)

The tragic fact is that North Vietnam is systematically and brutally mistreating the American soldiers it holds as prisoners. According to unmistakable evidence -- including who have been fortunate enough to escape or be released, and the testimony of ^{former} men^A who feel duty bound, in spite of the threats of their captors, to tell what is happening -- North Vietnam has committed countless violations of ordinary ~~humane~~ ^{decency} ~~standards~~, as well as violations of the 1949 Geneva Convention. Graham Martin, chairman of the U.S. delegation to the 21st International Conference of the Red Cross in Istanbul,

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that North Vietnam is:

- " 1. Refusing to identify the prisoners it holds and account for those missing in North Vietnam.
- " 2. Torturing prisoners both physically and mentally.
- " 3. Keeping prisoners in isolation, cut off from their fellow prisoners and from the outside world.

- "4. Failing to provide an adequate diet.
- "5. Failing to repatriate the seriously, sick or wounded.
- "6. Refusing to permit impartial inspection of prisoner facilities by the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] or other appropriate intermediary.
- "7. Using prisoners for propaganda purposes.
- "8. Denying regular exchange of mail between all prisoners and their families.
- "9. Failing to provide adequate medical care to all prisoners in need of treatment." (Dept. of State Bulletin Vol. , No. , October 13, 1969, P. 324).

Lieutenant Robert F. Frishman of the U.S. Navy, a prisoner released by North Vietnam in the summer of 1969, has had this to say:

"I don't think solitary confinement, forced statements, living in a cage for 3 years, being put in straps, not being allowed to sleep or eat, removal of fingernails, being hung from a ceiling, having an infected arm which was almost lost, not receiving medical care, being dragged along the ground with a broken leg, or not allowing an exchange of mail to prisoners of war are humane."

The American people are united in their outrage at this barbarism. On August 13, 1969, forty members of the U.S. Senate -- representing both parties and all political views -- signed a statement condemning North Vietnamese brutality toward U.S. POW's and pledging their full support to the Administration in its efforts on behalf of American POW's. The statement declared:

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"[I]t may be that North Vietnam hopes through such cruel pressure to influence the policy of the United States toward the Vietnam conflict.

"If this is their intention, they are doomed to failure...

.....

"This obvious attempt by Hanoi to capitalize on our deep concern for these men, and to turn it to their propaganda or political advantage, is inhumane and inexcusable.

"We urge Hanoi not to be misled by our divergences on policy into believing that we are not united on this issue of simple humanity. Cruelty of the kind being practiced in this instance by North Vietnam can serve only to increase our determination and, in the words of Ambassador Lodge, 'cannot have a favorable effect on our negotiations.'

"We therefore pledge our full support to the Administration in its efforts on behalf of the American Servicemen held captive in North Vietnam.

"With the Administration, we too ask Hanoi to prove the 'humane and generous' policy it claims to follow in treatment of prisoners by naming the men in captivity, by immediately repatriating the sick and the wounded, by permitting impartial inspection of prison facilities, by assuring proper treatment of all prisoners, by making possible a regular flow of mail, and by undertaking serious negotiations for the prompt release of all American prisoners in their custody." (Dept of State Bulletin, Vol. , No. , Sept 8, 1969, P. 210.)

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A resolution to the same effect was introduced into the

U.S. House of Representatives in September 1969, co-sponsored by **200** U.S. Congressmen. (H. Con. Res. 355, 91st Cong., 1st Sess., reprinted in Dept of State Bulletin Vol. , No. , Oct 13, 1969, P. 317).

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In spite of North Vietnam's callous disregard of its obligations under the 1949 Geneva Convention ~~which it~~ ~~allows~~, the United States and the Republic of Vietnam have complied with these international humane standards. Ambassador Lodge pointed out to the 33d plenary session at Paris on September 13, 1969:

"In accordance with the Geneva convention, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam has provided lists of prisoners' names to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"The prisoners are allowed to correspond with their families. These camps conform to the standards established by the Geneva Convention, and they are visited frequently by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, who inspect them thoroughly and hold private interviews with prisoners. A number of the sick and wounded prisoners have been released, and our side has expressed willingness to make arrangements for the release of all seriously, sick or wounded prisoners." (Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol. , No. , Sept 29, 1969, P. 283.)

When the United States raised these prisoner-of-war questions at the Paris meetings, the North Vietnamese

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Ambassador Ha Van Lau declared at the 34th plenary session on September 18, 1969:

"At the last session, the U.S. delegate manoeuvred to divert the attention of public opinion and to evade the fundamental questions by putting forward and inflating the question of American pilots captured in North Vietnam. This attitude can only increase the impasse of the conference, create more difficulties

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and further delay the peaceful settlement of
the Vietnam problem."

Ambassador Lodge replied at the next session, on
September 25, 1969:

"The fate of those prisoners is not a peripheral
question. It is a central issue. You have
acknowledged that yourselves by including the
question of prisoners in your 10-point proposal."
(Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol. , No. ,
Oct. 13, 1969, P. 317).

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H. Proposals for a Political Settlement

The expanded talks that convened for the first time on January 25, 1969, were the first Paris sessions to deal with the substantive issues of a political settlement. Of course, the commencement of these expanded talks was the outcome of President Johnson's efforts which resulted in the understanding of October 31, 1968. But it fell to the new Administration to present the first comprehensive and detailed United States proposals for political settlement in South Vietnam.

This Government originally proposed that the two outside powers -- the United States and North Vietnam -- concern themselves with the question of mutual withdrawal, leaving the political settlement in South Vietnam to be negotiated among the South Vietnamese themselves. North Vietnam rejected this proposal since it refused to discuss the question of mutual withdrawal with the United States.

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of inviting the United States to participate in both the political and the military settlement. We have accepted this invitation:

The President stated in his May 14 speech:

"[T]he military withdrawal involves outside forces

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and can therefore be properly negotiated by North Vietnam and the United States, with the concurrence of its allies. The political settlement is an internal matter which ought to be decided among the South Vietnamese themselves and not imposed by outside powers. However, if our presence at these political negotiations would be helpful, and if the South Vietnamese concerned agreed, we would be willing to participate, along with the representatives of Hanoi, if that were also desired."

The North Vietnamese recommend that we "participate" on the military issues by departing from Vietnam immediately, and on the political issues by "overthrowing" the South Vietnamese Government. We have chosen to participate in a more constructive fashion.

1. Free Elections: A Coalition Electoral Commission and International Supervision

The United States has given its wholehearted support to the detailed proposal for guaranteed free elections offered by President Nguyen Van Thieu of the Republic of South Vietnam.

President Nixon and President Thieu affirmed at their meeting on Midway Island on June 8, 1969:

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"The two Presidents confirmed their conviction that the form of government under which the people of South Vietnam will live should be decided by the people themselves. ... They declared for their part they will respect any decision by the people of South Vietnam that is arrived at through free elections.

"The two Presidents agreed that it would be appropriate to offer guarantees and safeguards for free elections. Provisions for international supervision could be written into the political settlement." (Dept of State Bulletin, Vol. , No. , June 30, 1969. p. 551)

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On July 11, 1969, President Thieu proposed the following basic principles for a political settlement:

"1. All political forces, including the organization called the NFLSV [National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam], ... can participate in the elections, provided that they renounce violence and pledge to recognize the election results.

"2. To insure that the elections are correctly held, an electoral commission, in which various political forces, including the organization called the NFLSV, are represented, can be set up. The ~~electoral~~ commission will insure that equal opportunity is provided for every candidate in the electoral campaign.

"The electoral commission will be entitled to observe the polling and the counting of ballots in order to see that the voters enjoy full freedom to vote and that the counting of ballots is completely genuine.

"3. An international organization will be set up to observe the elections and to insure that the elections are duly held for everyone.

"4. We are ready to discuss with the other side the schedule and procedures for holding elections.

"5. There will be no reprisals or discrimination in the post-electoral period.

"6. The Republic of Vietnam Government pledges to respect the election results, no matter how they turn out. We challenge the other side to pledge likewise.

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"The communists can participate, free from discrimination, not only in the polling, but also in the counting of ballots under international observation. In addition, the elections are only valid when they are held under circumstances under which the southern people can exercise their right to free choice, free from any intimidation or pressure. Therefore, the problem of holding elections must be associated with the cessation of violence and terrorism and with the withdrawal, under international control, of non-South Vietnamese forces."

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President Nixon endorsed these proposals in a statement on July 11, 1969:

"President Thieu's proposal would establish a set of procedures and guarantees to ensure that the political future of South Vietnam would reflect, as accurately and as fairly as possible, the will of the people of South Vietnam -- including those whose allegiance is to the other side as well as those whose allegiance is to his own government." (Dept of State Bulletin, Vol. , No. , July 23, 1969, P. 61.)

These proposals represent a significant departure in allied policy.

For one thing, the invitation to the N. L. F. to participate as an organization in South Vietnamese political life had never been made before. The joint statement issued by President Johnson and President Thieu in Canberra, Australia, on December 20, 1967, had declared:

"In the light of the elections which ... have taken place, he [President Thieu] noted that the Government of Vietnam is now prepared to grant full rights of citizenship to those now fighting against the Government who are prepared to accept constitutional processes and to live at peace with the constitutionally elected government.

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to discuss relevant matters with any individuals now associated with the so-called National Liberation Front, while making clear that his Government could not regard the Front as an independent organization in any sense." (Dept of State Bulletin, Vol. , No. , Jan. 15, 1968, p. 73. Emphasis added)

President Thieu's proposals of July 11, 1969, allow "all political forces, including the organization called the NFLSV,"

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to participate in the elections, provided only that they join the Saigon Government in ending the military competition and in pledging to abide by the results of the elections. The NLF is invited to join with the Government in an interim coalition electoral commission to plan and manage the election, to put forward its candidates, and to participate in the counting of ballots. President Thieu's proposal also included international supervision to guarantee the fairness of the election, and a willingness to agree to any other procedures to guarantee fairness.

The Government of the Republic of Vietnam has also indicated that it no longer regards the 1967 Constitution as an obstacle to holding elections immediately or to admitting Communist participation. Article 52, Section 2, of the Constitution now prescribes a four-year term for the President and Vice-President, which would seem to rule out

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"Every activity designed to propagate or implement Communism is prohibited." But South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam indicated on September 24, 1969, that if North Vietnam is willing to discuss electoral procedures at Paris, the Constitution can easily be amended. (See his statement in the Washington Post, Sept 25, 1969, p. A23)

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2. Our Flexibility as to Details

President Nixon declared on May 14:

"The South Vietnamese Government recognizes, as we do, that a settlement must permit all persons and groups that are prepared to renounce the use of force to participate freely in the political life of South Vietnam. To be effective, such a settlement would require two things: first, a process that would allow the South Vietnamese people to express their choice; and second, a guarantee that this process would be a fair one.

"We do not insist on a particular form of guarantee. The important thing is that the guarantees should have the confidence of the South Vietnamese people and that they should be strong enough to protect the interests of all major South Vietnamese groups."

The President emphasized that the United States and the Government of South Vietnam are entirely willing to negotiate with the other side on the details of these procedures:

"I believe this proposal for peace is realistic and takes account of the legitimate interests of all concerned. ... It can accommodate the

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We and the Government of South Vietnam are prepared to discuss its details with the other side. ... [T]hese proposals are not offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis."

If the other side is truly worried about unfair procedures or cheating, let them propose additional safeguards. Let us discuss, at Paris, the size and composition of an international supervisory body or an international peace-

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keeping force. Let us discuss, at Paris, the possible techniques of pollwatching or ways of guaranteeing the safety of candidates and their freedom to campaign throughout the whole country. Let us discuss, at Paris, the possible constitutional mechanisms for accommodating and protecting an opposition party and its candidates after the election. In short, let us recognize that both sides are afraid of discriminatory procedures and cheating, and that a political settlement, if there is to be one, depends on negotiating a detailed compromise agreement on a procedure that gives all sides a fair chance. Let us all accept the principle of free elections open to all, and then negotiate the details until all parties are satisfied.

The North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front have proposed only that the United States "overthrow" the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and impose a provisional coalition government consisting of their side and

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I. Willingness to Accept any Outcome

The United States Government and the Government of the Republic of Vietnam have affirmed on several occasions that they will respect any decision by the South Vietnamese people that is arrived at through free elections.

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President Thieu declared on July 11, 1969:

"The Republic of Vietnam Government pledges to respect the election results, no matter how they turn out. We challenge the other side to pledge likewise."

President Nixon declared on May 14, 1969:

"We are prepared to accept any government in South Vietnam that results from the free choice of the South Vietnamese people themselves."

1. No Military Bases or Alliances

President Nixon emphasized on May 14 that:

"We seek no bases in Vietnam.

"We insist on no military ties."

The United States is prepared to reduce its military presence in South Vietnam down to zero, as part of an *agreed* settlement ~~and limit on bases~~ that insures South Vietnamese self-determination. Clearly, there is no place for a United States military base in a South Vietnam which is free of external military forces, which is at peace, and which

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the participation of all South Vietnamese political groups.

The liquidation of U.S. military bases will be easy to arrange as part of a settlement. The United States has no plans for a "Residual force" following such a settlement.

Nor is there any need for a military alliance

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between the United States and South Vietnam once the conflict has been settled on the basis of a secure peace guaranteed against external interference. Since the United States regards the 1954 Geneva agreement as the best framework for the restoration of peace, the United States prefers a settlement which would allow South Vietnam to preserve its independence and sovereignty without any external military ties.

2. Neutrality and Reunification

President Nixon affirmed in his May 14 address:

"We are willing to agree to [South Vietnam's] neutrality if that is what the South Vietnamese people freely choose.

...

"We have no objection to reunification, if that turns out to be what the people of South Vietnam and the people of North Vietnam want; we ask only that the decision reflect the free choice of the people concerned."

This, too, is the mandate of the 1954 Geneva accords, The United States did not send its armed forces to South Vietnam to render the division of Vietnam permanent, nor to preserve the pro-Western character of the Government of South

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Vietnam. Rather, the United States objective has always been simply to prevent a determination of these issues by force of arms. This Government believes that the free elections envisaged in the 1954 Geneva agreement for all Vietnam should be held as soon as possible to determine these issues, and in an atmosphere undisturbed by the

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the presence of any external military forces in the South.

The National Liberation Front and North Vietnam now claim to agree that the North and the South are to be treated separately, for the time being, and that reunification is a matter to be settled peacefully and gradually, once the war in the South is ended. Point 7 of the N. L. F.'s 10 points, endorsed by North Vietnam, declares:

"The reunification of Vietnam will be achieved step by step, by peaceful means, through discussions and agreement between the two zones, without foreign interference.

"Pending the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, the two zones shall re-establish normal relations in all fields on the basis of mutual respect."

Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, chief N. L. F. delegate to the Paris talks, told a Japanese interviewer in Paris on September 4, 1969, that:

"[T]he coalition government which will be formed in the south [according to the N. L. F.'s proposals] will have to conduct long negotiations with the socialist regime in the north, as the former will be an 'extensive democratic government' ~~but not necessarily socialist~~."

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The presence of the North Vietnamese Army in the South, and the frequent Communist statements that "the Vietnamese people have the right to fight wherever the enemy is," ~~to defend their fatherland~~ (e.g., North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry Memorandum, July 12, 1969), are difficult to reconcile with this promise of "step by step"

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and "peaceful" reunification. Nevertheless, the United States and the Government of South Vietnam continue to seek a means whereby the Vietnamese people can choose reunification, if they so desire. Free elections as envisioned by the Geneva accord, are the most democratic way of accomplishing this.

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II. THE RECORD OF COMMUNIST INTRANSIGENCE AND BELLIGERENCE

A. Refusal to Accept the Principle of Mutuality

1. Insistence on Unconditional U.S. Withdrawal

The United States has proposed a timetable for simultaneous withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces, with appropriate safeguards to assure each side about the compliance of the other. This is a fair proposal based on the even-handed principle of mutuality. The details of the timetable and safeguards are open to negotiation until both sides are assured of the reliability of the plan.

The Communist negotiators at Paris have replied categorically that there can be no progress -- in other words, no negotiation -- at the Paris talks until the United States withdraws its own forces unconditionally, immediately, totally, and unilaterally.

Ambassador Ha Van Lau, the North Vietnamese delegate at Paris, put it this way, at the 23d plenary session on June 26, 1969:

"[A]s long as the United States sticks to its neo-colonialist position of aggression and demands 'mutual troops withdrawal' and 'reciprocity,' i. e., that the Vietnamese people pay a price for the end of U.S. aggression, the Paris conference on Vietnam can make no progress."

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At the 36th plenary session on October 2, 1969, Lau declared:

"The Vietnamese people, the American people and the world people demand from the Nixon administration a rapid, total and unconditional withdrawal from South Vietnam of its troops and of those of other foreign countries of the U. S. camp, and not the piecemeal withdrawal of a few insignificant batches of troops so as to ask for some 'response,' that is to say, to demand that the Vietnamese people pay a price for the cessation of U. S. aggression."

This Communist position is not a proposal for negotiation, but -- as Lau accurately put it -- a "demand." It is a demand that the United States accept the entire Communist position in advance of any negotiation. It is not clear what would be left to negotiate if the United States acceded to this demand in advance. The N. L. F.'s 10-point Program of May 8, 1969, gives a clue. The Program states, in Point 10, that:

"The parties shall reach agreement on international supervision of the withdrawal personnel, arms and war material, or the United States and the other foreign countries of the American camp." (Emphasis added)

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In other words, the only details left to be negotiated are the details of the United States' capitulation.

The United States has proposed international supervision to guarantee the withdrawal of both North Vietnamese and United States forces from South Vietnam.

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2. North Vietnamese Troops in South Vietnam

The difference between the two sides' positions at Paris thus turns on the question whether other non-South Vietnamese troops should be allowed to remain in South Vietnam even after all United States troops have left. There is no dispute about whether United States troops will all leave as part of a settlement; we have pledged to withdraw them all, and have already begun to do so. The only question is whether the North Vietnamese Army shall leave at the same time.

There are more than 130 battalions of regular North Vietnamese Army forces actively engaged in South Vietnam. North Vietnam and the N. L. F. have never admitted that North Vietnamese regular army forces are in the South, but nonetheless they condemn the idea of mutual troop withdrawal -- not for being meaningless (which it would be if there were no North Vietnamese troops in the

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negotiator, declared at the 28th plenary session at Paris, on July 31, 1969:

"[W]hat kind of right does the U. S. arrogate itself to compel the Vietnamese fighting for self-defense, to 'withdraw' together with the aggressor who is the U. S.? The so-called 'mutual troop withdrawal' is obviously not 'fully compatible' but on the contrary runs entirely counter to the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people."

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The Communist negotiators attempt to reconcile these contradictory positions (refusing to admit that the North Vietnamese Army is in the South, and arguing that it is unfair to make it withdraw) by making two extremely question-begging arguments: (1) that the United States is the aggressor and "[North] the Vietnamese" are not, and (2) that all Vietnamese Communist forces are fighting "on their own soil." Both these assertions are made, for example, in Mme. Binh's statement at the 25th plenary session at Paris on July 10, 1969:

"[President Nixon's May 14 proposal] was focused on the request of 'mutual troops withdrawal,' an absurd request of the U. S. aimed at blurring the difference between the aggressor who is the U. S. and the Vietnamese people who resist aggression, and compelling the latter to pay a price for the end of U. S. aggression. Clinging to its demand of 'mutual troops withdrawal,' the U. S. seeks a pretext for prolonging the presence of the American expeditionary troops in South Vietnam. The U. S. has in fact negated the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people and the right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people. That is the reason why, from the beginning, our delegation has severely criticized this programme. We have pointed out that Vietnam to commit aggression against South Vietnam, it must withdraw all its troops and those of the other foreign countries in the American camp, without asking any condition whatsoever. As for the Vietnamese people who resist aggression on their own soil, they are exercising the sacred and inalienable right to self-defense of all nations. The question of Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be resolved by the Vietnamese parties among themselves."

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The North Vietnamese and N. L. F. negotiators acknowledge the existence of an entity called "South Vietnam," and they concede that reunification as called for under the 1954 Geneva agreement should take place gradually and by peaceful means.* They also assert that the question of South Vietnam's future should be settled by the South Vietnamese people themselves. On what basis, then, can they assert (or imply) that the North Vietnamese Army has a right to remain in the South after United States troops have left?

The dispute at Paris now is not about why the North Vietnamese entered South Vietnam in the first place. The United States has contended that North Vietnamese forces, regular and irregular, intervened in South Vietnam long before any U. S. forces entered South Vietnam, but this whole issue is now academic. The United States Government has therefore concentrated, since January 20, 1969, on the issue of getting all external forces out. The simplest and fairest

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Communist negotiators continue to insist on this ^{as an} issue of "principle," which only prolongs the impasse at Paris.

* See point 7 of the N. L. F. Program, discussed in Part I, section 1, subsection 2 above.

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As U.S. negotiator Lawrence Walsh stated at the 22d plenary session at Paris on June 19, 1969:

"That position gets us nowhere. Why do you avoid stating whether North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam are going to go back to North Vietnam? Vague reference that the Vietnamese parties will resolve that problem is not enough.

...

"You reject the idea of mutual withdrawal because you say it places the aggressor on the same level as the victim of aggression.

"We could, with more justification, argue that in reality it is your side which seeks to confuse the aggressor -- North Vietnam -- with the victim of aggression -- South Vietnam. This kind of argument, however, does not help to advance the negotiations. The practical fact is that North Vietnam, as well as the United States and its allies, has forces in South Vietnam. A negotiated settlement requires that all non-South Vietnamese forces be withdrawn from South Vietnam." (Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol. , No. , July 7, 1969, P. 6.)

The North Vietnamese assertion that North Vietnamese forces have a right to be in the South is gratuitous. It is

probably also an afterthought, since there were no North Vietnamese regular army troops in the South until 1964-65, and the conflict in the South has been going on since long before then. The problem seems to be that the Communists are afraid to see North Vietnamese regular army troops leave South Vietnam even after U. S. troops leave.

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The United States proposal for withdrawal of all external forces is a proposal to return, as far as outside forces are concerned, to the status quo ante 1964. The proposal offered by South Vietnam and the United States for free elections supervised by a coalition electoral commission is designed to allow the contending South Vietnamese parties to compete politically, once the war is ended. The United States program of Vietnamization is aimed at enabling the South Vietnamese Government to take over the burden of defending itself without the presence of U.S. forces, even before the war ends. The North Vietnamese and N. L. F. cannot complain if the South Vietnamese Government is capable of defending itself. They will complain, but they have no legitimate basis for objecting.

The fact is that both the South Vietnamese contending parties -- The Government in Saigon and the N. L. F. -- have lost much of their self-reliance since the entrance of

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/04/28 : LOC-HAK-242-4-19-8's show the following:

-- As of July 1, 1968, over 70 percent of all Communist main-force combat troops in South Vietnam were North Vietnamese regular army forces. (55 percent of all Communist battalions were North Vietnamese battalions, and another

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16 percent consisted of North Vietnamese regular army forces serving in nominally Vietcong battalions.)

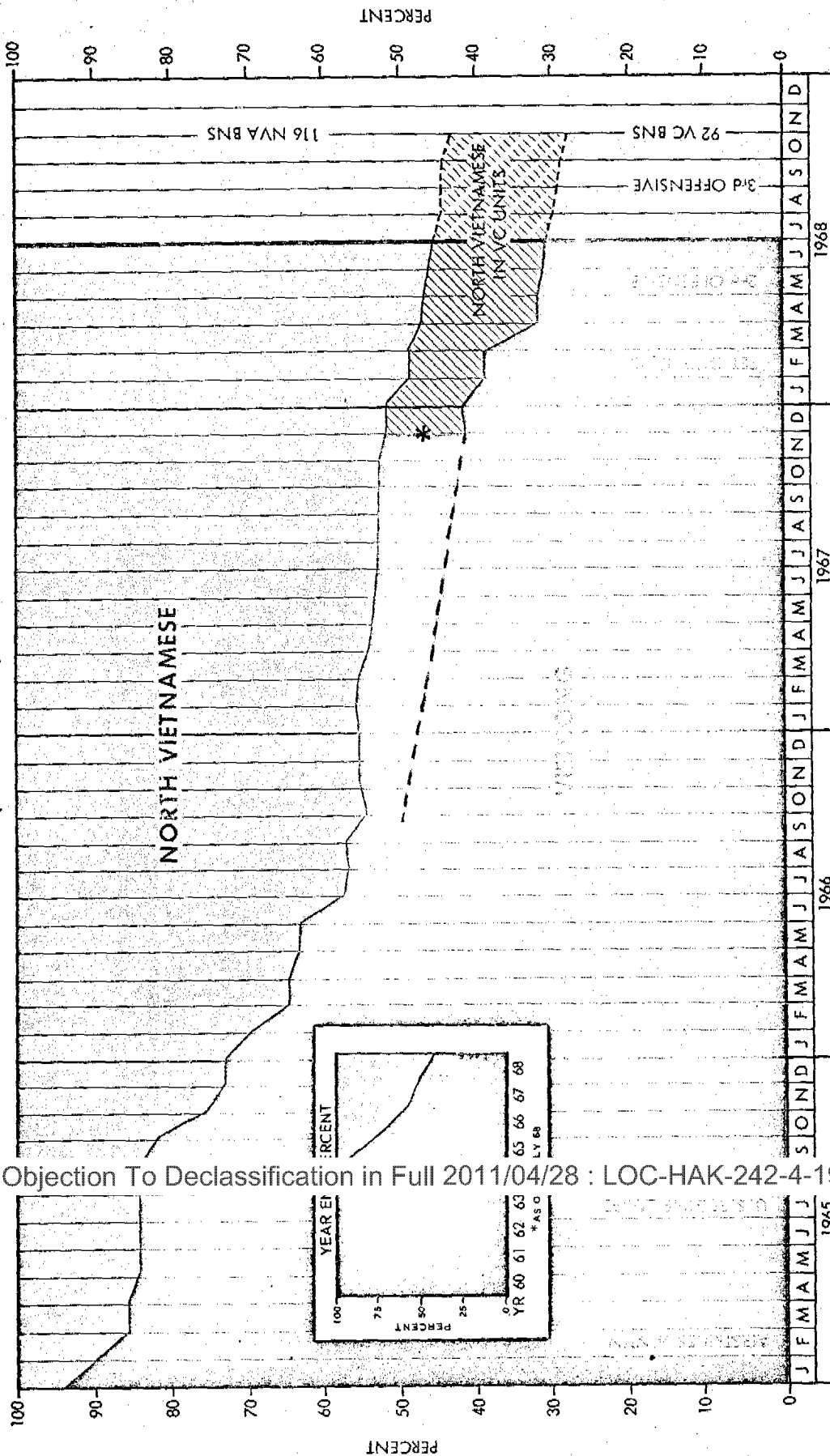
-- U.S. troops constituted 33.3 percent, and allied ~~forces~~ forces 4.1 percent, of the total of U.S., south Vietnamese, and allied forces in South Vietnam at the end of 1968. The only way to "Vietnamize" the war -- and preferably the peace -- is to allow the South Vietnamese on both sides to learn to fend for themselves and protect their interests without external support.

Communist condemnation of the U.S. policies of Vietnamization and mutual withdrawal is perhaps a token of their own doubts about whether the N. L. F. can fend for itself militarily against a self-reliant South Vietnamese Government. Nevertheless, we have offered the N. L. F. an opportunity to compete on a ~~fair~~ basis politically, in free elections in which the only test of strength is their attractiveness to the electorate of South Vietnam. Under no theory --

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Government be obliged to face the combined assault of N. L. F. and North Vietnamese armed forces.

PROPORTION OF
NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIETCONG
COMBAT BATTALIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM
(IN PERCENT)



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Source: CINCPAC & COMUSMACV, Report on the War in Vietnam (1968).

VIETNAMESE AND ALLIED FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM

